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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 004172

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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PHSA](#) [OIIP](#) [KNNP](#) [KSTC](#) [ETTC](#) [EG](#) [IAEA](#) [NPT](#)

SUBJECT: EGYPT COMFORTABLE WITH "NON-RESULT" OF NPT REVCON;
COMMENTS ON PSI AND EXPORT CONTROL

REF: A. CAIRO 2740

1B. 03 CAIRO 1620

Classified by Acting DCM Michael Corbin for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: In a June 1 conversation with a member of the Egyptian delegation to the NPT Review Conference, Poloff heard Egypt's view that the RevCon's inability to agree on a final document was a satisfactory outcome for Egypt. "We did your work for you" in preventing discussion of intractable issues, claimed Adel Ibrahim of the MFA Office of Arms Control and Disarmament. "Failure can be healthy for the system," suggested Ibrahim, by identifying systemic improvements to be addressed. Ibrahim said Egypt, by pursuing its own interests, helped avoid an unproductive confrontation between the U.S. and Iran. He said the U.S. clearly did not intend to compromise at the RevCon and should be happy with a "non-result" which did not set its interests back. Ibrahim also commented on the Proliferation Security Initiative (see paragraph 9) and export control (paragraph 10), showing greater willingness to work with the U.S. on the latter. End summary.

12. (C) Poloff reviewed Egyptian views of the NPT RevCon June 1 with Adel Ibrahim, Director of the MFA Office of Arms Control and Disarmament and a member of the Egyptian delegation to New York throughout the May 2005 conference. Ibrahim was satisfied with the RevCon's inability to agree on a final document, given the fact that tough issues (including those of particular interest to Egypt or the U.S.) were simply not headed towards a resolution at the conference in any case. "We did your work for you," he said, suggesting that Egypt's role as a spoiler of sorts drew attention away from U.S. policies which he said "were not compatible with international views" and would have gone nowhere if discussed in depth.

13. (C) "Failure can be healthy for the system," said Ibrahim, adding that the "result" of the RevCon reflected the actual situation in the nonproliferation world. Nonproliferation and disarmament are "under pressure," he emphasized, and that was reflected in New York. He also cited NGO participation, noting that the overall tone of the conference was a "barometer of reality" and sent the message to the world that "the system" needs to be improved. Country groupings are in his view "dysfunctional," with one country being obliged to share the position of others with which it has few common interests. Iran and Chile share a place in the NAM, for example, and the U.S. shares a grouping with New Zealand. A non-outcome at the RevCon identified "loopholes in the system" and offered the building blocks for potential improvement, said Ibrahim.

14. (C) Ibrahim claimed that Egypt's vocal role prevented a direct (and unhelpful) confrontation between Iran and the U.S. He said Iran was hiding within the NAM group, the U.S. was "hiding behind" the Western grouping, and the chair did not permit an open-ended consultation; these factors contributed to the avoidance of a clash. Some delegations had accused Egypt of "protecting Iran" by taking the focus away from an inevitable confrontation between the western countries and Iran, Ibrahim noted; he rebutted by saying the RevCon was "by no means heading towards a condemnation of Iran" in any case, and Egypt was only protecting its own interests.

15. (C) Noting the tradition of "give and take" at NPT conferences, Ibrahim said the U.S. was clearly not ready to "give" this time -- relying instead on "logic and philosophy" to hold its ground. The U.S. had "nothing tangible" to give on the Middle East, for example, and the U.S. knew that Egypt could accept "nothing less than 2000." Additionally, the U.S. was selectively turning from multilateral solutions and seeking "plurilateral" mechanisms, said Ibrahim (citing the Proliferation Security Initiative, Nuclear Suppliers Group, and reform of the IAEA Board of Governors as examples), and had goals not conducive to a RevCon consensus in any case. The combination of these factors made a "non-result" acceptable to both the U.S. and Egypt, he said; the U.S. should be happy with an outcome that did not detract from its interests.

16. (C) Ibrahim added, without elaboration, that he sensed a

certain "coordination" between the U.S. and Egyptian delegations, given the absence of complaints from the U.S. side and our mutual interest in avoiding confrontation. Ibrahim said the U.S. delegation "seemed satisfied" as the RevCon concluded; U.S. views towards the end of the conference and made it clear that our long-term goals were not hindered by the "failure" of the RevCon. Ibrahim said the U.S. was always "quick to demarche" the GOE when critical issues were at stake, yet he sensed no urgency from the U.S. side and therefore felt the GOE could look back on its role at the RevCon with "no guilty feelings." (He did note, without expressing any concern, that France had complained to the Egyptian Foreign Minister about Egypt's role.)

17. (C) Asked who was the engineer of Egypt's approach to the RevCon, Ibrahim said internal debates within the GOE delegation were robust and constant. The result of these "checks and balances" was the ultimate approach which Egypt displayed at the RevCon. Ibrahim said other delegations noted the intensity of internal Egyptian discussions.

18. (C) Note: Members of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, an NGO which participated in the RevCon, told the Charge May 31 (septel/NOTAL) that in spite of disagreements, the NPT dialogue was useful. They recommended a "track two" approach to keep parties talking even when intractable issues were not likely to be resolved. End note.

19. (C) Reminded of the second anniversary of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and ongoing U.S. interest in an Egyptian endorsement, Ibrahim said the Egyptian Ambassador in Washington had attended the Secretary's anniversary event the previous day. He lamented,

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however, that the next announced PSI simulation exercise would be based on the scenario of chemicals shipped from central Europe to the Middle East. He said Egypt had a "principled" reason for not signing the Chemical Weapons Convention (i.e., related to Israel's WMD programs and not due to any GOE interest in chemical weapons themselves) and was concerned by the optics of a PSI exercise linking chemical weapons with the Middle East.

110. (C) Poloff noted that even prior to PSI, the USG sought consultations with Egypt on export control and border security (EXBS) programs, yet had seen little headway. Ibrahim said it might be time to revisit the potential for such consultations, which in any case could build upon relationships already established (through Sandia Labs, for example) and would be consistent with the implementation of UNSCR 1540. Egypt was also eager to strengthen its national safeguards system, said Ibrahim. He added that any further approach on EXBS would be easier for the MFA to coordinate if the Egyptian Defense Attache in Washington were convinced (by the USG) of the utility of the program, as the Attache could prepare the Ministry of Defense to take a more proactive stance in Cairo. (Comment: Ibrahim's approach, and candid insights, may help advance the EXBS discussion beyond the interagency delays noted ref B. End comment.)

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